

United States Department of the Interior



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Region 1
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Mid-Pacific Region
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Dear CVP Stakeholders, CALFED Participants, and Interested Parties:

Over the past several weeks, Interior has been developing proposals for defining and implementing several provisions of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). This effort follows on the work of the agency and stakeholder work groups formed during the CVPIA Administrative Process.

Today, Interior is releasing three documents:

1. A revised draft Restoration Plan for the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP)
2. A revised draft Administrative Proposal on the AFRP
3. A revised draft Administrative Proposal on the Management of Section 3406(b)(2) Water

In this transmittal letter, Interior is outlining the stakeholder process it intends to follow to move quickly toward finalizing these papers. The AFRP will be finalized following completion of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

On May 12, 1997, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior released a letter to the stakeholder groups and interested public committing to work with the agencies and stakeholders to find a more collaborative process for working on CVPIA and other water management issues in the Bay-Delta watershed. Based upon subsequent discussions, Interior has developed and proposes the following process to engage the stakeholders in resolving the broad set of issues surrounding the CVPIA's dedication of (b)(2) water.

Overview

Interior is committed to making final decisions on implementing the (b)(2) and related provisions of the CVPIA in the immediate future, and to fully engaging the stakeholder community during that process. To do so, a policy group and three technical groups will be convened, as described below. The focus of these groups will be the exchange of information and ideas that will assist in finalizing the (b)(2) policy paper and implementing the near-term CVPIA fish and wildlife measures using all management tools currently available.

The policy group will meet on June 24, 1997. At that time, Interior will distribute a revised draft Restoration Plan for the AFRP, a revised draft Administrative Proposal on the Management of Section 3406(b)(2) Water, and a revised draft Administrative Proposal on the AFRP. The revised draft Administrative Proposal on (b)(2) water will define a set of environmental measures to be implemented as part of the first water management plan.

Each of the technical groups will then meet to review and build upon the framework described in the papers and will report back to the policy group with any comments or recommendations from individuals. Interior envisions an iterative process in which the key issues will be identified and stakeholder input received. Interior will then be able to incorporate that information into its decisions which will be reflected in the final Administrative Proposals.

Policy Group

This group will be composed of the leadership of the key agencies and stakeholder interests. It will serve as the primary management-level forum for exchanging information and ideas about the development of the water management plan.

Fish Group

This group will be asked to review and provide stakeholder comment on the environmental measures described in the revised draft Restoration Plan and revised draft Administrative Proposal on (b)(2) water. The group members should consider whether the proposed environmental measures can be revised to better reflect hydrologic and biological information and to make use of real-time monitoring. Ideally, these measures would be relatively fixed for the term of the water management plan to avoid yearly allocation disputes, to provide a better basis for evaluation, and to provide greater certainty to all stakeholders. This Fish Group will include scientists from the key agencies and interest groups.

After receiving the comments of this group and other interested members of the public, Interior will implement a set of Delta and upstream measures during the term of the water management plan, within the framework outlined in the Administrative Proposals.

Toolbox Group

This group will be asked to review and provide stakeholder comment on how the broad range of water management tools can be used to address the impacts of the water management plan on water contractors, consistent with the revised Administrative Proposals. The group members should also consider related water management issues raised in the revised Administrative Proposals.

Modeling Group

This group, which we envision as the existing Bay-Delta Modeling Forum, will help clarify the appropriate uses, strengths and weaknesses, and key assumptions and outputs of the different water supply models being used in CVPIA implementation and in other Bay-Delta decisionmaking processes.

CONCLUSION

Interior encourages the active participation of all interested stakeholders and the public in the final resolution of these issues. We believe that an accelerated effort must be made at this time so that these fundamental CVPIA issues can be resolved. Interior is committed to conducting the stakeholder process outlined above in the next few weeks and reaching final resolution of these issues before the end of the summer.

Sincerely,



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Mid-Pacific Region



Michael J. Spear
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Region 1

Enclosures